DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 459 963 PS 030 062

AUTHOR Colker, Laura J.
TITLE Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free. Building Blocks Guide for Parents.
INSTITUTION American Council for Drug Education, Rockville, MD.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 1995-00-00
NOTE 30p.; Accompanying picture books not available from ERIC. For the Guide for Caregivers, see PS 030 063.
CONTRACT RP1006001
AVAILABLE FROM ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Tel: 877-433-7827 (Toll Free); Fax: 301-470-1244; e-mail: edpubs@inet.ed.gov; Web site: http://www.ed.gov.pubs/edpubs.html.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Books; *Child Rearing; Childhood Needs; Childrens Literature; *Drinking; *Drug Use; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Role; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; *Prevention; Substance Abuse

ABSTRACT

The Building Blocks program uses six picture books to show preschoolers the kinds of skills and behaviors they should be developing now that will protect them from alcohol and drug use later. This Building Blocks guide for parents of children working with the program at their child care center gives information and activities to work with children at home to help them build: (1) self-concept and self-confidence; (2) a sense of personal responsibility; (3) trust in self and others; (4) an understanding of the difference between fantasy and reality; and (5) the ability to solve problems. The guide summarizes the picture books used in the program and suggests activities to do at home. Also included are a description of the parents' role in rearing a drug-free child, answers to questions parents often ask about alcohol and other drugs, and sources of information on alcohol and other drug abuse prevention. (HTH)

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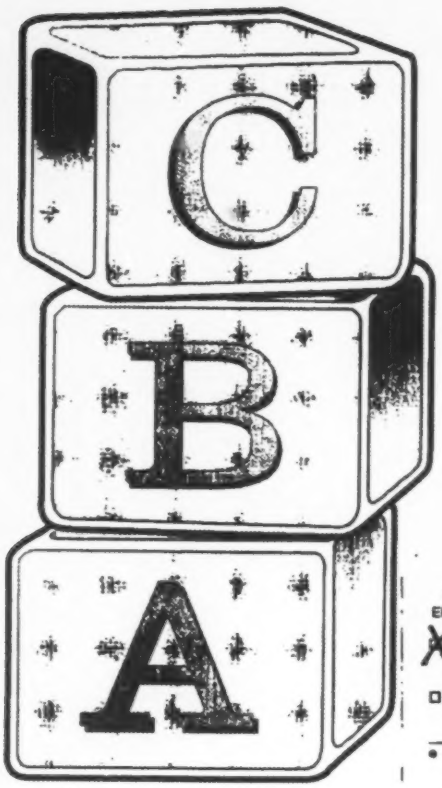

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BUILDING BLOCKS

HELPING PRESCHOOLERS GROW UP ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE

GUIDE FOR PARENTS

PS 030062

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BUILDING BLOCKS

Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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Letter To Parents

Dear Parents:

Soon your children will be hearing stories from a picture book series called Building Blocks.

Building Blocks books are specially written to help young children grow up to be alcohol and drug free.

Many of us worry that our children may become involved with drugs when they get older. We do not realize that the skills and abilities that our children begin developing when they are three, four and five years old can have an influence on whether they will use drugs when they get older.

These skills and abilities include:

- Self-concept and self-confidence
- A sense of personal responsibility and responsibility towards others
- Trust in self and trust in others
- An understanding of the difference between fantasy and reality
- An ability to solve problems

The Building Blocks program does not talk about alcohol and drug use directly. Instead, it uses stories to show young children the kinds of skills and behaviors they should be developing now that will protect them from alcohol and drug use later.

Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

As a group, drug-free children are confident and responsible. They have learned to take care of themselves and to be concerned about their friends and family.

From the time they are very young, children who grow up drug free get along well with other children. They have good relationships with at least one parent, guardian or other adult who is important in their lives and, based on that experience, know that adults can be trusted. As a result, drug-free children feel secure. They also tend to listen to adults and believe what they say.

Because an adult has taken an interest in them, helped them learn to care for themselves and praised them for their efforts, drug-free children have developed a sense of competence. They understand that if they work at something, they can learn to do it. As a result, they feel proud, capable, and comfortable within their world of family, school, and neighborhood.

In addition to this positive self-concept, drug-free children also have other things in common. Most grow up in homes where alcohol is not abused. Even if there are drugs in the neighborhood, the drug-free child's parent or guardian does not use illegal drugs and expresses strong, negative feelings about drug use and the problems it can cause.

Often, children who grow up to use alcohol and drugs are likely to have problems obeying rules and getting along with other children. By the time they are six years old, many of these children show signs of being both verbally and physically aggressive. As they grow older, these children feel more and more like outsiders and do not see themselves as fitting in. Many of them are poor students and find it hard to do well in anything related to school; nor do they find other areas (such as art, music, or sports) where they can prove themselves. Since many grow up in homes where alcohol is abused and illegal drugs are used, it is not surprising that they turn to alcohol, marijuana, inhalants, or crack to pass the time, to feel good, and to escape from the demands of a world for which they are unprepared.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

As parents, the most important things you can do to help children grow up alcohol and drug free are to:

- Encourage positive self-concept by identifying tasks preschoolers can do (feeding themselves, buttoning and zipping clothes, brushing their teeth), showing them how to do each task, giving them opportunities to practice each new skill, and praising them for their efforts.

- Show them adults can be trusted by providing a good example yourself and pointing out other trustworthy adults in the community (teacher, mail carrier, firefighter, police officer, librarian).
- Encourage them to perform tasks that are appropriate for their age level (feeding the goldfish, putting their toys away, clearing the table) and let them know what a big help they are.
- Help them develop problem-solving skills by involving them in household chores that require some thought. For example, young children may drop silverware when they clear the table. You might say, "It's hard to manage all those forks and spoons. What can we do to keep the silverware from dropping?" Then, together with your child, talk about some ideas for solving the problem. "What if we put them in a bowl or tray before we remove them from the table. Would that work better?"
- Find a skill, personality trait or talent in your child that makes him or her special. Comment positively about it as often as possible. (Try to avoid commenting on such things as personal appearance or clothing.)
- Help them develop responsibility for their own personal health habits by encouraging children to wash their hands, brush their hair, clean their teeth, and eat wisely. Children who are used to taking care of their bodies are better able to understand that illegal drugs and alcohol can hurt them. Therefore, they are more likely to listen to warnings against their use.
- Emphasize the beauty and pleasure to be found in the real world. Although young children enjoy make-believe and can learn much from pretending, it is important that they know the difference between fantasy and reality. Children who enjoy the real world and feel comfortable in it are much less likely to believe that quick and magical solutions like drugs or alcohol will help them with their problems.
- Develop family rules that apply to all family members. Repeat your family's rules about giving out medicines and handling these products in the home. Make sure children understand that there are reasons for these rules. For example, "If you take the wrong medicine, you will still feel sick. If you take too much, you may feel even sicker." Tell them in advance what will happen if they break these rules. Make sure you follow through with an appropriate action every time a rule is broken, such as not permitting a favorite TV program to be watched.

WHAT ARE THE PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT?

The Building Blocks books fall into three groups.

The first two stories, *Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am* and *Who Can Help Me?,* feature three-year-olds who are learning to take responsibility for themselves and to trust adults to help them solve problems.

The second group of Building Blocks books focuses on four-year-olds whose ideas about personal responsibility expand to include planning in *Get Ready . . . Here I Go* and the desire to help others in *I'm Such a Big Help!.*

The last two books in the series, *Super Duper Timmy Cooper* and *Denton's Detectives,* concern five-year-olds who learn the difference between fantasy and reality and sharpen their problem-solving skills.

Your child's family child care provider or preschool teacher will read each story to your child, discuss it, and follow it up with activities to help your child more fully develop the characteristic shown in the story.

When your child brings home the "Things To Do at Home" page that accompanies each Building Blocks story, you will know which book was read that day.

You are the most important person in your child's life. Your participation in the at-home Building Blocks activities will encourage your child to practice the skills and behaviors shown in each book and make them a part of his or her daily routine.

The following are outlines of each story with suggestions for at-home activities to help you talk with your child about what happened in each Building Blocks book.

For your information and convenience, the following items are also included:

- Questions Parents Often Ask About Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Sources of Information on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention
- For Help With Treatment And Referrals
- A mail-in coupon for ordering a free copy of *A Parent's Guide to Prevention: Growing Up Drug Free*, published by the U.S. Department of Education.

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am is a rhyming story featuring three-year-old Keisha Ann, a lively, African-American girl who lives in a city townhouse with her mother, her father, her big brother, and her pet cat, Fuzzycat. Keisha Ann's grandmother lives nearby and is an important part of Keisha Ann's family.

In the story, Keisha Ann tells all about her life. She describes her daily activities and gives a tour of her house, including her favorite hideaway in the attic.

Keisha Ann talks happily about being a big girl who can dress herself, hang up her clothes, brush her teeth, and help set the table.

The purpose behind Keisha Ann's story is to show young children that Keisha Ann feels proud because she can do things herself. Preschoolers who develop a healthy self-concept like Keisha Ann's are less likely to become involved with alcohol and other drugs when they grow older. They already feel good about themselves and do not need a drug to produce these feelings for them.

One of the reasons Keisha Ann is so capable is that her parents and grandmother spend time with her to teach her the simple skills she needs to take care of herself. They help her as she learns each new skill and they praise her for her efforts. Keisha Ann feels close to them because they care for her and give her what she needs to become a competent person.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you about Keisha Ann.
2. Talk to your child about all the "big" boy and girl things he or she can do (for example, brushing teeth, washing hands). Ask if Keisha Ann could do things your child cannot do, and offer to help him or her to learn that skill.
3. Ask your child to draw a picture of himself or herself. Even if the drawing does not look like your child, use the finished picture to talk about how happy your child makes you feel. For example, you might say, "When I come home from work and see your smiling face, I feel wonderful."
4. Suggest that you and your child make a Responsibility Chart together. The chart should list the child's chores (help set the table, hang up pajamas, and so on) and include a picture of each task. You might want to display the chart on the refrigerator.

5. Find books in the library or bookmobile or pictures in magazines that show young children helping out at home. Share these with your child and ask whether he or she would like to do what the children in the picture are doing. You might want to cut pictures out of old magazines and use them to make the Responsibility Chart.
6. Find ways to talk to your child about what he or she can and cannot do. For example, "You are doing a good job setting out the forks and spoons. I will put out the knives because they are too sharp for you to handle." "You have gotten so big, you can reach the toothpaste and put it on your toothbrush. But, you cannot take anything else from the medicine cabinet. Only Mommy or Daddy or Grandma can get those things for you."

Who Can Help Me?

Three-year-old Matthew Manning (nicknamed M&M) will be going off to day care in a few days. He lives in the country with his father, sisters, and pets and is nervous about going to day care for the first time. He worries about all the things he cannot do by himself such as getting home from day care, getting medicine if he is sick, and getting to the places he might need to go.

M&M's father calms his fears by making a plan with him that describes which adults will help M&M with these things. His dad also reminds M&M that only the people he names can help M&M.

We know that children who have good relationships with responsible adults are much less likely to use alcohol and drugs. *Who Can Help Me?* encourages three-year-olds to trust adults, to identify adults who are trustworthy and to understand that certain activities (such as taking medicine) should only be done with the help of a trustworthy adult.

Who Can Help Me? is a participatory question and answer book. At certain points in the story, the reader asks the young listeners, "Who can help M&M?" with a special task. The children then are told to pick out that person from among the other characters in a group picture. The questions help to hold the children's attention. They also help preschoolers begin the process of making judgements. Children who learn how to make good judgements are much less likely to use drugs when they are older.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you M&M's story.
2. Talk to your child about who can help him or her with important activities. You might say, "We have rules about helpers just like the boy in the story. Only Mom, Dad, and Grandma can give you medicine" or "The only people who can take you on a bus or drive you in a car are Mom and Dad." Be sure to go over this list many times so your child is sure about it. You might ask your child to draw a picture of the people who can help him or her do certain things.
3. When you go out with your child, point out police officers and store security guards. Introduce your child to trusted neighbors, the librarian, and other adults who can help in an emergency.
4. Make sure your child knows his or her full name, address, and telephone number. You can make a game of it and ask for this information often until he or she knows it by heart.

5. If you have 911 emergency telephone service in your community, make sure your child knows what it is and how to use it. Help your child act out the process of making an emergency call until you are satisfied that he or she knows what to do. Together with your child, make an emergency telephone number label and post it by the phone.

Get Ready . . . Here I Go

In this story, four-year-old Luis makes up his own plan for getting ready for preschool. Luis lives with his Hispanic-American family in a city apartment. Family members include his mother, father, aunt (Tia Lucia), grandfather (Papá Grande), and baby brother (Carlos).

Luis' plan consists of five steps that he will follow, in a certain order, every day. He is very proud of his plan and cannot wait to show it off to his family.

As Luis goes through each step, the young audience first sees all the things Luis can do for himself. They also see how willingly and capably Luis performs each task, and how one activity leads to another. In addition to being responsible for himself, the children see that Luis is concerned about how his actions affect the rest of the family. For example, when Luis dresses himself, he is careful to be quiet so he does not wake his baby brother.

Get Ready . . . Here I Go expands on the idea of personal responsibility which was first discussed in the Building Blocks books for three-year-olds. In *Get Ready*, the main character begins to understand that taking responsibility includes more than simply doing a task or chore; it also means doing it at the right time, in the right order, and in the right way. For example, Luis brushes his teeth after eating, and he washes before dressing. Through his plan, Luis is learning to think before he acts. Children who later become involved with drugs are often impulsive. They behave in quick and hasty ways, rushing headlong into action without thinking. One way to help children lay the foundation for decision-making later on is to encourage them to make plans the way Luis does.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you what Luis was so excited about.
2. Hold a family meeting to talk about what everyone must do to get ready for the day. Talk about the differences between what children do and adults do. Spell out each person's responsibilities and explain how they help the family as a whole. For example, "When you help clear the table, that gives me the extra time I need to get dressed."
3. In *Get Ready . . . Here I Go*, Luis describes the steps he must take to get ready for preschool. In step 1, he leaves the bedroom quietly without waking his brother. In step 2, he washes his hands and face, and so on. Work with your child to make a step map or list of what he or she needs to do to get ready for each day. This kind of activity will

help to improve your child's thinking skills as well as encourage cooperation and participation in your family's morning routine.

4. When planning family outings, parties, or get-togethers, invite your child to participate. Ask what needs to happen first, second, and third. Use your fingers to reinforce the order of each activity so your child sees and hears the sequence of events. As your child becomes used to this approach, ask him or her to come up with the steps that must be taken.

5. When your child needs to do something, help him or her by breaking the job down into small, manageable tasks. For example, when it is time to put the toys away, suggest that your child start by picking up the crayons and putting them in a box, then putting the paper on the shelf, then storing the blocks in the closet or their special container, and so on.

6. Describe your own planning process aloud as you work around your home, "First, I'll wash off the lettuce. While it dries, I'll cut up the cucumbers and other vegetables. Then I'll toss them all together in this bowl and our salad will be ready for supper." The more children hear and see planning in process, the more likely they will be to adopt this approach as their own.

I'm Such a Big Help!

The main character in this humorous story is a four-year-old, Asian-American girl. Jennifer Han lives in the suburbs with her mother, father, and baby sister.

Jennifer is trying very hard to be helpful to others, but has not completely mastered all the skills she is learning. For example, when she pours the juice at breakfast, she fills the glass too full and it overflows. When she dresses her baby sister, she stuffs both of her sister's legs into one pant leg of the baby's overalls. And when she helps her mother sort the laundry, she sometimes gets the socks mixed up.

Despite these missteps, Jennifer's parents and adult neighbors welcome her help and are happy to see her trying so hard. They know that a good deal of trial and error is involved in learning a new skill.

When children are supported in their efforts by caring adults, they are more likely to work hard at something until they master it. They grow to understand that setbacks and frustration are part of the learning process and begin to take them in stride.

In contrast, many children who grow up to use drugs and alcohol do not get much pleasure from school, sports, or hobbies, since their skills are not strong enough in any one area to provide them with a sense of enjoyment. They have not developed the patience they need to overcome frustration and stick with a task long enough to do it well. As a result, they very often feel inadequate and worthless. Many turn to drugs and alcohol to get the good feelings other children obtain from their accomplishments.

A second idea presented in the book concerns responsibility toward others. Jennifer really wants to help the members of her family and her neighbors. Children who contribute to their families by cooperating in everyday tasks feel important and worthwhile. As they grow older, it is only natural for them to extend their desire to help outward to the larger community. Children who become involved with drugs and alcohol, however, often lack a feeling of responsibility towards others. They do not feel they have any role to play in the world around them because they never learned to play an effective role in family life.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you some of the things Jennifer helped to do at home.
2. Take a walk with your child through your home. Try to identify all the chores that need to be done to keep the household running smoothly. Point out one task that adults can do (vacuum the floors), one that children can do (pick up newspapers or

toys), and one that adults and children can do together (fold laundry, dust, or wash and dry the dishes).

3. Together, decide on one or two chores your child can do to help the family out. Make a chart for the chores and put it on the refrigerator or another handy spot. Let your child keep track of his or her completed chores by helping him or her check off the chart each day. Keep in mind that four-year-olds are very eager to try new things, but often make mistakes. It is important to praise your child's efforts while gently telling or showing him or her how to do the chore correctly, without losing your patience.
4. Plan a time when you will show your child how to do something new that can be shared with the family and work with him or her until it is completed. Making a dessert for a family dinner, making simple holiday decorations, and picking flowers for the kitchen table are activities young children enjoy and do well.
5. Remember to thank your child every time a chore is completed, especially one he or she has agreed to do. Tell your child how his or her help has saved you time or work, or made things easier or more pleasant for everyone in the family.

Super Duper Timmy Cooper

Timmy Cooper is a five-year-old, African-American boy who lives in the city with his mother and father. Timmy likes to go to the park every Saturday with his dad. Sometimes his dog, Duke, goes along.

In the story, Timmy's biggest wish is to do a flip on the park jungle gym and land on his feet without falling. Timmy practices on the jungle gym for several weeks, but becomes frustrated when he is not successful. One day, he decides to act like his favorite super hero, thinking it will help him reach his goal. He puts on a cape, says magic words, calls himself Super Duper Timmy Cooper, and returns to the park to try again as a "super hero." When he finally does a flip, he thinks it is because of his "super powers."

Timmy is so impressed with what he thinks super powers can do that he tries to make a super buddy out of his dog, Duke. When the dog refuses to follow his directions, Timmy becomes upset and tells his parents what he has been trying to do with Duke. Timmy's parents tell him that super powers do not work in real life. Although it is fun to wear a cape and say magic words, they explain that Timmy learned to flip because of his hard work. They tell him the only way Duke can learn to do tricks is if Timmy spends the time and energy it takes to train him.

The purpose of this story is to help young children understand the difference between what is real and what is not. Many pre-teens and teens who use drugs say that when they are high their problems "disappear like magic." They feel good, confident, smart, and powerful without any effort on their part. They are too willing to believe that a pill or a beer or a marijuana cigarette can improve or change their situation in some way. The truth, of course, is that these so-called improvements are only temporary and the problems and responsibilities of real life remain after the high wears off. These teens are confused about the difference between fantasy and reality.

Some parents worry when their young children have imaginary friends. There is, however, a significant difference between a five-year-old with a make-believe friend and a twelve-year-old who thinks that a drug can solve his or her problems. Even though they cannot put their understanding into words, children with make-believe friends know they are imaginary. In contrast to older children who use fantasy to escape from the challenges of daily life, young children use their "friends" in a positive way to help them face fears or loneliness.

Children who are aware of the difference between fantasy and reality are much less likely to believe that drugs and alcohol will solve their problems, improve their lives, or

change them in some special way. They are more likely to question the positive claims made for drugs and alcohol and are better able to say no and mean it.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you what Timmy wanted to do.
2. Watch some Saturday morning cartoons with your child. Ask your child if the characters are real or pretend. If your child is unclear, gently point out the differences between real animals and people, and pretend animals and people (for example, real people cannot fly and real dogs cannot talk).
3. Take your child to the library or use books or magazines you may have at home. Find pictures of real animals and talk about what each animal is like. Then find a book with fantasy animals as characters. Ask your child to tell you which animals are real and which are pretend. Again, ask your child to explain what the differences are. Librarians often can make good suggestions about what books to select.
4. When you go by a pet store or to the zoo or circus, talk to your child about the work involved in taking care of animals. Describe how long it takes to train a pet or performing animal. Emphasize the difference between real animals and the animals in books or on television.
5. When you hear ads on the radio or see them in magazines or on television, talk to your child about what the ad says or suggests and compare the ad with what the product is really like. Ads for children's toys, for example, can be misleading. Point out the differences between what the ad seems to promise and what the product really turns out to be.

Denton's Detectives

The children at Mrs. Denton's family child care home are so good at solving problems, they are known as Denton's Detectives. When they are about to begin a new project, the children like to investigate it first and get all the facts before they start.

When Mrs. Denton tells the children they will be planting a carrot garden, the detectives want to know where they should plant the seeds and how much they should water. To learn the answers to these questions, the children talk to the produce man at the supermarket, the children's librarian, and one of Mrs. Denton's neighbors who is a skilled gardener. Then they test out the information they have received and, once they are satisfied with the results, they work together to plant the carrot garden.

At first all goes well, but then the plants begin to disappear. To understand why, the children investigate and find out that rabbits are eating the carrots. Their solution is to fence in their carrot garden and plant a second, unfenced garden for the rabbits.

When the fenced garden produces more carrots than the children can eat, the detectives have another problem, "What can they do with the extra carrots?" Their solution is to use the surplus carrots to dye T-shirts, bake muffins, and make jewelry. When they have completed their "carrot projects," they decide to share them at a Carrot Carnival that they hold for their parents and friends.

In *Denton's Detectives*, the children learn that what they do to the garden will determine how the carrots turn out. The carrots did not grow by accident or magic. They grew because they were planted in soil and received the right amount of light and water. In the same way, the plants did not just disappear. The rabbits ate them.

The point of *Denton's Detectives* is to help children understand that if you take a certain action, something will happen as a result. Also, if you think about something before you do it and get all the facts together before you act, you will have a pretty good idea of what the results will be.

Understanding the connection between actions and consequences is particularly important in preventing alcohol and other drug use. Children who can think about what alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs will do to them (for example, get them into trouble, make them sick, give them bad breath) are better able to refuse drugs when they are offered. Such children have the skills they need to consider a problem or situation critically. They are then able to think about the effect a particular action could have on them and make a decision about what to do based on those effects. Children who learn to think first are much less likely to take dangerous risks.

A second theme in *Denton's Detectives* concerns cooperative learning. The children in the family child care home work together to solve problems and to complete projects. They take pride in their group identity as Denton's Detectives and share in the fun that their group efforts produce.

One characteristic of drug-using children is their failure to "fit in" or belong to a positive group. Unfortunately, "druggie" groups, just like gangs, give alienated youngsters a needed sense of identity. By encouraging young children to participate in appropriate group activities while they are growing up, you give them many opportunities to receive positive support from peers. As a result, they will be less attracted to groups involved in risky or unhealthy behavior.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you about Denton's Detectives and the garden.
2. Help your child plant some seeds (mung beans and alfalfa are easy to grow) in a small tray or empty egg carton. Talk about everything that needs to be done to help the seeds grow. Remind your child to water the seeds and comment on the results so the child sees the connection between what he or she does and the plants' growth.
3. Take a walk through your neighborhood. Point out different kinds of plants and trees and talk about how to take care of them. Mention some problems that occur (for example, leaves piling up on lawns or sidewalks, tree limbs touching power lines, bushes blocking signs). Ask your child how these problems might be solved (raking leaves or trimming trees and bushes).
4. Work together with other families in your area to clean up some part of the neighborhood. Have a block party afterwards as a reward.
5. Plan a family meal in which everyone is responsible for something (for example, a salad, bread, beverage, and so on). Make sure the child understands that the meal is the result of everyone working together and doing their part.
6. Work with all the members of the family to put together a food package for people in need. Talk about what should go into the package. Use this as an opportunity to talk about responsibility towards others and different ways that problems can be solved when people work together cooperatively.
7. Introduce opportunities for problem-solving at home and involve your child whenever possible. For example, "You want to paint or play with play dough. I want you to be able to do so, but I just washed the floor and I'm afraid it will get dirty. What can we

do?" Help your child come up with solutions like putting newspaper on the floor. Then praise your child for being a good problem solver.

The Parent's Role in Rearing a Drug-Free Child

No one cares more about an individual child than his or her parents. You are the child's first and most important teacher and provide the model for his or her positive behavior. When you support and reinforce the developmental efforts underway at your child's preschool or day care program, you help to ensure its success. By participating in the Building Blocks program and educating yourself about alcohol and other drugs, you are contributing significantly to your child's drug-free future.

QUESTIONS PARENTS OFTEN ASK ABOUT ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

1. *"I am a single mother with two young boys. My younger brother loves my kids and spends most weekends with them. He has a good job and takes them to the zoo, the movies and the playground for basketball and other games. The problem is my brother smokes pot. He talks about drugs and uses marijuana when he is with my kids. At heart, he's a good guy and he's my sons' only male role model. What should I do?"*

   Even though you love your brother and do not want to hurt him, your children's safety and healthy future must come first. You need to talk openly with your brother about his drug use. You must tell him that he cannot use drugs if he wants to continue to see your sons, nor can he talk about drugs in front of them.

   While your brother is using drugs, his judgement is not what it should be. If he's driving, his reflexes are not as good as they should be, either. Your children are in danger while they are in a car with him.

   Also, your brother's drug use has not caught up with him yet, but it may. He may be arrested and go to jail because of his drug use. If your children are with him when he is caught, it will be very frightening for them.

   Your brother is your sons' role model. They are seeing their favorite uncle break the law and use drugs without getting into trouble or having any problems. No matter what you say about drugs, your sons will think that drugs are OK because your brother uses them. Therefore, your children may be much more likely to use them.

   If your brother cannot accept your conditions about no drug use, you cannot let him continue his relationship with your sons. The risk is too great.

2. *"My children have a friend who uses drugs. They want to help her. What can they do?"*

   While your children can continue to support their friend during this difficult time in her life, you or some other adult needs to step in now. This is not a task children

should take on. In most cases, the best thing to do is to contact the child's parents. They may not want to hear what you have to say at first, but they must be told. Children need the help of a caring adult to overcome a drug problem. Once parents know their child is in trouble, they can talk to a doctor, a member of the clergy, a mental health counselor, or a drug treatment counselor for advice on how to handle the problem.

3. *"My 12- and 13-year-old kids are talking about drugs a lot lately. I hear them say things like, 'Marijuana's not that bad, parents just don't want anyone to have any fun.' Should I be worried or is this just empty talk?"*

   You should be concerned. When children talk about drugs in a positive way, they are almost always using them. Tell your children that you're worried, repeat your rules about not using drugs and what you will do if you find they are breaking your rules, and stay alert for physical signs that they are using drugs. If you have any doubts, tell them you will have a urine test taken. Often, this is enough to stop the drug use. Be prepared to follow through on your threat if they are using drugs.

4. *"My father has a drinking problem and often gets drunk in front of my three- and five-year-old. My mother says to ignore it, that the kids are too young to know what's going on. But I am worried. Should I say something to my kids?"*

   Your children may not know their grandfather is an alcoholic, but they are seeing behavior they should not. Tell your mother that you can no longer allow your children to see their grandfather drunk because it sets a bad example for them. Your children also may be thinking that they are the reason their grandfather behaves so badly.

   You may want to contact Al-Anon (look in your telephone book for a local number), an organization that helps families of alcoholics understand what is going on and how they can help the alcoholic.

   Sometimes, problem drinkers will respond to threats from loved ones and get help from Alcoholics Anonymous or other recovery programs. However, if your father continues to drink, keep your children away from him and try to think of ways they can continue their relationship with your mother without his participation.

5. *"My friend says when kids smoke tobacco cigarettes, there is a good chance they will use other drugs. Can this be true?"*

   Yes. Children who smoke tobacco cigarettes are much more likely to drink alcohol and use marijuana than non-smokers. Tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana are known as

"gateway" drugs (or "steppingstone" drugs) because children who use them often go on to use other drugs.

Many adults do not realize that tobacco is addictive. In fact, it is just as habit-forming as heroin. In addition, once children learn to smoke tobacco cigarettes, they are much less afraid to smoke marijuana or crack because they know how to inhale.

After children have tried tobacco, they are less concerned about breaking rules and will often begin drinking. Children who use alcohol then understand what it means to get intoxicated and are much more likely to try marijuana, crack and other drugs that also promise a "high" or a "rush."

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION

Alcoholics Anonymous Service Office

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10163
(212) 870–3400
Self-help recovery organization for alcohol abusers of all ages. Check your telephone directory for local meetings.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters

P.O. Box 862 Mid-Town Station
New York, New York 10018
800–356–9996
Provides assistance and information to families of alcohol abusers. Check your telephone directory for local listings.

American Council for Drug Education

136 E. 64th St.
New York, New York 10021
(212) 758-8060

Provides pamphlets, fact sheets, and videos on drugs and alcohol. Call for a free catalog.

American Lung Association

1740 Broadway
New York, New York 10019
(212) 315–8700
Provides materials on the dangers of smoking. Check your telephone directory for listing of local affiliates.

Children of Alcoholics Foundation, Inc.

200 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
New York, New York 10166
(212) 351–2680
Provides general information and an excellent guide to resources available for children of alcoholics.

Families in Action

2296 Henderson Mill Road, Suite 300
Atlanta, Georgia 30345
(404) 934–6364
Offers materials to families coping with or attempting to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse.

National Association for Children of Alcoholics

11426 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852
(301) 468–0985
Offers materials and information about support groups for children of alcoholics.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, Maryland 20852
800–729–6686
Distributes information on alcohol and other drug use prepared by the federal government.

National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence

12 West 21st Street
New York, New York 10010
(212) 206–6770
Provides information on alcohol, drug dependency, and local programs for treating and preventing dependence.

National Crime Prevention Council

1700 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 466-NCPC (6272)

Provides educational materials featuring "McGruff: The Crime Dog" that are designed to prevent crime and drug use.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Washington, DC
1–800–624–0100

Provides information from the U.S. Department of Education on talking with children about alcohol and other drugs.

Office on Smoking and Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

4770 Buford Highway, N.E.
M.S. K-50
Atlanta, Georgia 30341–3724
(404) 488–5705

Provides information on the health hazards of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco and on programs to stop smoking.

For Help With Treatment and Referrals

Self-help groups are available in most local communities. These include **Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Cocaine Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Parents Anonymous,** and **Women for Sobriety** among others. Listings of meetings can be obtained from headquarters offices. Their telephone numbers can be found in local directories.

Alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs are often conducted by local hospitals and health centers and can be found in the telephone directory under such listings as "alcohol," "alcoholism," or "drug treatment." Some directories list drug and alcohol agencies in the first section of the white pages.

The **National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)** keeps a current list of agencies and directors in each state that oversee alcohol and/or drug abuse prevention and treatment activities. The NASADAD telephone number is: (202) 783–6868.

The **National Drug Information and Treatment Referral Hotline** directs drug users and their families to drug treatment facilities in local communities. Their telephone number is 800–662–HELP (4357).

The **National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence** offers an information line providing similar services for those who have problems with alcohol and/or drugs. The number is 800–NCA–CALL (622–2255).

Mail-In Coupon

To order your free copy of the U.S. Department of Education's ***Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention***, call (toll free): 1–800–624–0100, or complete the following form and mail it to GROWING UP DRUG FREE, PUEBLO, CO 81009.

Please send me a copy of ***Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention***

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State ____ Zip Code ____

Building Blocks: Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

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Acknowledgements

We want to express our deep appreciation to the staff and parents of the child care centers that generously shared their time and experience with us as participants in the evaluation component of this project. We also express appreciation to the models who make these books come to life.

Participating Programs

- Emery Center
  Washington, D.C.
- Malcolm X Center
  Washington, D.C.
- Paradise Center
  Washington, D.C.
- Stoddert Terrace Center
  Washington, D.C.
- Boston-Hoffman Center
  Arlington, Virginia
- Higher Horizons Day Care Center
  Fairfax, Virginia
- Prince Georges County
  Employees Group Child Care
  Upper Marlboro, Maryland
- Prince Georges County School
  Employees Group Child Care
  Landover Hills, Maryland

*U.S. G.P.O.:1995-384-708

Building Blocks: Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

Picture Books for Three-Year-Olds

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am
Who Can Help Me?

Picture Books for Four-Year-Olds

Get Ready ... Here I Go
I'm Such a Big Help!

Picture Books for Five-Year-Olds

Super Duper Timmy Cooper
Denton's Detectives

Guide for Parents

Guide for Caregivers

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